

UPPER MARLBORO, MD – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer today met with law enforcement officials from throughout the Fifth Congressional District.

The meeting highlighted federal programs and partnerships that provide direct resources to local law enforcement and enhance successes in both combating violent crime and promoting community policing.

During the roundtable discussion, the US Marshals presented an update on the Capital Area Regional Task Force (CARTF), while the US Department of Justice discussed upcoming opportunities for local law enforcement through the COPS program.

“Police officers and law enforcement personnel sacrifice a great deal to protect our communities and it is our duty to provide them with all available resources to protect our neighborhoods from harm and to ensure that they are able to safely perform their job,” Hoyer said.

Hoyer expressed his disappointment that President Bush’s budget guts funding for programs that assist local law enforcement agencies by eliminating COPS Law Enforcement Technology Grants, the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance program—a grant program that provides anti-violence, anti-drug and crime prevention grants—and additional Department of Justice grant programs that direct federal funds straight to local communities, including a reduction in High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) funding of nearly \$20 million.

“COPS funding has provided law enforcement officials serving our district with the real time equipment, technology, and personnel that they need to keep their departments running safely and efficiently,” Hoyer said. “Since its creation in 1994, I have joined the Congress in supporting the COPS program because it has allowed officers to spend more time on the streets of the 5th District fighting and preventing crime through time-saving technology, information-sharing systems, and improved communications equipment.”

To date, over \$58 million in COPS grants have been awarded to the 5th District, funding 908 additional police officers.

In August of 2003, the United States Marshals Service created CARTF in an effort to target state, local and federal fugitives in the greater DC Metropolitan area that are wanted for violent crimes and other serious felonies.

“The U.S. Marshals are doing an outstanding job of keeping our families safe from fugitives on the loose,” Hoyer said. “CARTF is bringing these violent criminals to justice and helping provide peace of mind to our community.”

Attending the meeting with Congressman Hoyer were: Tom Hession, Chief Inspector, Capital Area Regional Task Force (US Marshals); Johnny Hughes, US Marshal, District of Maryland; Don Donovan, Chief Deputy US Marshal, District of Maryland; Corey Ray, Public Liaison Specialist, US Department of Justice; police chiefs, sheriffs, and officers from the 5th District.

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